



# NRCS Species for Plant Collections 2008

## *Melica nitens*

**Scientific Name:** *Melica nitens* (Scribn.) Nutt. Ex Piper

**Common Name:** Three-flower melicgrass

### Morphological Characteristics:

**Habit - Three-flower melic** is a perennial, cool season bunchgrass which grows 24 - 36 inches tall. This grass reproduces by seed mostly April to June.

**Leaves** – leaf blades may be smooth or with hairs, flat, 3 - 10 mm broad.

**Inflorescence** - panicle is mostly 10 – 26 cm long with lower branches usually compound, spreading or ascending.

**Spikelets** – much longer than broad (8 – 15 mm long)

**Habitat and Range** – Three-flower melic is found from Pennsylvania to Iowa and Kansas, and south to Virginia, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. In Texas, it is most often found in the Edwards Plateau and the North Central regions, but can be found west to the Trans-Pecos and East to the western portion of East Texas. It grows in open woods, on moist canyon slopes, in canyon bottoms, on rocky grasslands, as well as along stream banks and along roadsides. Three-flower melicgrass tends to prefer partial shade and calcareous or sandy loam soils.

**Other** - Three-flower melic requires partial shade and medium amounts of water. This bunchgrass is excellent for wildlife and the enhancement for water quality.



Photo Courtesy of:  
The Samuels Roberts Noble Foundation

### Conservation Use:

Why collect this plant? The James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center has identified this plant as having potential benefits to the following NRCS conservation practice standards: 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management, 512 Pasture and Hay Planting, 342 Critical Area Planting and 550 Range Seeding. Your assistance in collecting this plant helps support the NRCS conservation practice standards which are employed daily to conserve the natural resources of Texas!

### Centers Requesting Seed:

James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center - Knox City, Texas

### How to Collect Seed/Plants:

1. Identify native plant stands in your area. You can go to the following websites for helpful photos <http://plants.usda.gov> or <http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html> or [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)
2. Determine if seed is mature. Separate the seed head from the plant.
3. Hand strip mature seed heads by grasping the bottom of the seed head then gently pulling away from the base of the plant. Deposit seed heads in a brown paper bag **not** in a sealed plastic bag. This will cause seeds to mold. Collect seed from a minimum of 30 to 50 plants.
4. When collecting plants, rooted stem sections may be harvested and placed in wet paper towels to keep roots moist. Place plants in a sealed plastic bag for shipment.

5. Label each collection as it is made so collections do not get mixed up. Information required includes: Collector's name, number of plants collected, location (parish, city, highway, and GPS coordinates), site description (soil type, slope, and plants growing in association).
6. Complete NRCS-ECS-580; Plant Collection Information Form and mail with collected seeds to the NRCS Plant Materials Center requesting the species.

James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center  
3776 FM 1292  
Knox City, TX 79529-2514

E. Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center  
3409 N FM 1355  
Kingsville, TX 78363

East Texas Plant Materials Center  
6598 FM 2782  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964

### Helpful Tips:

Look for superior plants that display differences in color, height or forage abundance and record observations. Differences in growing site or location should be made into separate collections if they are separated by more than 1 mile between sites.

### Photos:



Photos Courtesy of: The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation



Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 1: 246. Courtesy of [Kentucky Native Plant Society](#). Scanned by [Omnitek Inc.](#)

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